

NOTES FROM THE:

Professional Military Comptroller School

by Ms Glenda Scheiner



As the newest kid on the DoD Professional Military Comptroller School (PMCS) faculty, people often ask why I decided to become a PMCS instructor. My simple response is always the same—it was time to reinflate my Work ball! In a university commencement address several years ago, Mr Brian Dyson, former CEO of Coca-Cola Enterprises, spoke of life being a game in which one constantly juggles five balls. These balls are Work, Family, Health, Friends, and Spirit. He claimed that Work is the only rubber ball of the five. If you drop it, it will bounce back; however, the other four—Family, Health, Friends, and Spirit—are made of glass. If you drop one of these, it will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged, or even shattered. Therefore, Mr Dyson encourages a juggling act where you strive to balance these five balls and in so doing, balance your life. PMCS offers a great opportunity to focus on three of those five balls—Work, Health, and Friends.

Unfortunately, even though the Work ball is made of rubber, unless rubber balls are periodically reinflated with new air they lose their resilience. As resilience decreases, rubber balls bounce back less and less and become very difficult to juggle! PMCS offers an infusion of fresh air to reinflate your Work ball by providing approximately 70 stellar guest speakers per class from the highest levels of Financial Management within the DoD, academia, and the private sector. Many of these speakers are general officers or civilian equivalents; represent the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and DFAS; and provide first-hand knowledge of the latest information, initiatives, and issues on key financial management topics. In addition to very candid briefings, these speakers also provide a unique opportunity to participate in question-and-answer sessions both during the lecture periods and oftentimes in follow-on informal luncheons. The question-and-answer sessions provide a wonderful opportunity for participants to converse with these senior resource managers; however, this is not the only opportunity students have to converse with these speakers. Since PMCS students introduce all guest speakers, they meet with the speaker immediately prior to his or her presentation. This affords the student another great opportunity to interact with senior financial management personnel. In addition to the guest

lecturers, PMCS also reinflates the Work ball by providing a focus on career planning. Career advisors from each of the respective Services visit each class to provide general information on the latest directions in the career field and to meet with students one-on-one for career counseling. The PMCS exposure to the latest financial management issues, senior financial management personnel, and personal career counseling puts the bounce back in the Work ball and also provides students the opportunity to focus on the second of the five balls.

PMCS is a great place to put a renewed emphasis on the Health ball in the ongoing effort to achieve balance. Since PMCS emphasizes a well-rounded financial manager, health and wellness are integral parts of the curriculum. The PMCS wellness goal is to promote nutrition, exercise, and fitness in an effort to fully develop individuals who are mentally and physically equipped to deal with the challenges they face each day. Students hear professional speakers contrast the outstanding health benefits of good nutrition and regular aerobic exercise with the negative impacts of high cholesterol, stress, and lack of exercise. Students are given the opportunity to participate in cholesterol and blood pressure screenings. With results in hand, they hear a physician analyze these results and explain the health implications of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and smoking. Students are also encouraged to make daily aerobic exercise a part of their personal wellness routine by earning fitness points for the exercises that they accomplish each day while at PMCS. Finally, the various PMCS seminar groups enjoy friendly athletic competition that is comprised of the individual fitness point program plus team competition in selected activities. The goal is to have students recognize that a healthy lifestyle is an important part of striving to achieve and maintain balance in their personal and professional lives.

A third life ball also has the opportunity to thrive at PMCS. With class rosters consisting of up to 60 financial management personnel from across the DoD, students have an unprecedented opportunity to add new contacts to their Friends ball. Perhaps the PMCS motto should be Strength Through Diversity. PMCS is open to

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both military (Majors through Colonel) and Civilians (GS-12 to GS-15), with Captains and GS-11s accepted on a case-by-case basis. Quotas are allocated to the Air Force (24), Army (16), Navy and Marines Corps (9), and DFAS and other DoD Agencies (11). Each 60-member class is divided into five seminar groups that have a mix of military and civilians from the various services. Seminars meet at various times throughout the course to discuss topics such as financial management, leadership, and ethics in a small group atmosphere conducive to learning from the experiences of others. These discussions, as well as other learning experiences throughout the six-week course, build a greater depth and breadth of knowledge for students while fostering the forging of new friendships. As PMCS is equipping those who will take the leading roles in DoD financial management in the future, students are forming strong support networks that often remain with them throughout their careers.

PMCS is an invaluable way to reinflate the Work ball, put a renewed emphasis on the Health ball, and add new contacts to the Friends ball to assist students in achieving and maintaining a balance in life. Through hearing the latest resource management information directly from senior DoD financial leaders, participating in personal career planning sessions, renewing an emphasis on fitness and wellness, and forming networks with colleagues throughout the DoD, PMCS students leave the schoolhouse both personally and professionally rejuvenated. Juggling the five life balls without allowing the Work ball to deflate, or allowing one of the other four balls to drop and shatter, is a daunting feat! That is why PMCS continues to accept the challenge of training future financial leaders to capably handle three of those five balls—Work, Health, and Friends—in order to achieve the needed balance to be successful in life's ultimate juggling act!

